OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS

K-8 Education Toolkit

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation seeks to teach about and witness to the intrinsic dignity of the human person as an antidote to the grave sin of racism. The Committee explores and implements concrete solutions to address the racism that still pervades our society and our Church today, and works in collaborative ways to strengthen the response of all people to this evil.

In 2018, the U.S. bishops shared a pastoral letter against racism titled *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*. All school superintendents, administrators, and teachers are warmly encouraged to share the accompanying toolkit with Catholic schools and other relevant institutions in your (arch)diocese, so that students, and educators can grow together in faith, understanding, and unity.

The Pastoral Letter

Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love

Prayers

Children's Prayer: We Are All in God's Image

Invitation from Bishop Joseph Perry

An anonymous Japanese philosopher is famous for saying: "Some people are so good that nothing a leader can do will make them better. Others are so incorrigible that nothing can be done to improve them. But the great bulk of folk go with the moral tide of the moment. The leader must help create that tide!" As church leaders, teachers, administrators, and formators we carry a large role in reshaping the face of the earth!

Educational Resources

- Grade K Activity: We Are All Sacred | en Español – Introduces children to the idea that every person is created in God's image. The "God's Children of the World" slideshow celebrates global diversity and affirms each child's sacred worth.
- Grade 1 Activity: Fr. Augustus Tolton Story | en Español – Shares the inspiring life of Fr. Tolton, the first recognized Black Catholic priest in the U.S., highlighting perseverance, faith, and the call to serve despite racism.
- Grade 2 Activity: What Makes a Person? | en Español – Encourages students to reflect on the qualities that define human dignity, emphasizing that worth is not based on appearance, ability, or background.
- Grade 3 Activity: How Do We Respect Human Dignity? | en Español – Explores practical ways to honor others' dignity through kindness, inclusion, and standing up against unfair treatment.
- Grade 4 Activity: The Beatitudes Show Us True Happiness | en Español – Connects the Beatitudes to social justice, showing how Jesus' teachings guide us to live with compassion and seek justice for all.
- Grade 5 Activity A: Racism Imperils the Unity of the Body of Christ | en Español – Examines how racism harms the Church's unity, calling students to recognize and reject prejudice as a sin against the Body of Christ.
- Grade 5 Activity B: Implicit Bias and the Unity of the Body of Christ | en Español – Helps students understand implicit bias and its impact on relationships and community, encouraging self-awareness and empathy.
- Grade 6 Activity: The Unity of God's Family | en Español – Focuses on the Church as a diverse family united in Christ, challenging students to embrace differences and promote inclusion.
- Grade 7 Activity: Social Sin, Racism, and Our Response - The Native American Experience | en Español – Introduces the concept of social sin through the lens of Native American history, prompting reflection on collective responsibility and healing.
- Grade 8 Activity: Understanding Individual vs. Institutional Racism | en Español – Distinguishes between personal prejudice and systemic injustice, guiding students to recognize structures that perpetuate inequality and consider faithful responses.
- Everyone Belongs - A children's storybook and activities– Tells the story of Ray Ikanga, a refugee child navigating friendship and discrimination. Inspired by Open Wide Our Hearts, the book invites young readers to reflect on racism through faith, empathy, and action. Activities to accompany this story for classroom use are also available.